

But this time of year – no matter how beautiful the inside of a home is – there is no better place to be than outside. These three yards on the North Fork and Shelter Island create an oasis of summertime living.

Enchanted garden in Cutchogue



The pool area. (Credit: ©Anthony Crisafulli)

Landscape architect Stacy Paetzl has been in the design industry for 20 years. As the founder and principal of [Marshall Paetzl Landscape Architecture](#) in Mattituck and Amagansett, Paetzl and her team – which includes husband and fellow veteran landscape architect Jonathan Paetzl – specializes in creating functional, beautiful and sustainable land-use solutions.

But when it came time for the couple to design the gardens of their own Cutchogue home, it was admittedly “much harder” than an average project.

“Since we’re both designers, we had to agree on all the details,” Stacy explained. “However, we always say, when both of us agree, we know it’s just right, so it’s worth the extra time and effort.”

The couple lived in the house for several years before installing the pool, which created a unique set of challenges for the designers, who became accustomed to the backyard being open.

“I was really concerned that the pool would make the yard feel small,” Stacy said. “The backyard has two flat areas with a slope between. We decided to put the pool right in the middle of the slope, and create retaining walls above and below it. It was ideal because the slope was a part of the yard we really couldn’t use anyway.”

The Paetzels planted a dense border of perennials and grasses between the pool and vegetable garden, which adds visual interest in all seasons. For color, the designers incorporated lots of blues and purples from Joe Pye Weed, Sea Holly, Russian Sage, Lavender, Ornamental Oregano and several varieties of Alliums.

“It hides the pool in winter, and in summer it makes the pool feel like a private oasis,” she said. “When you’re lounging on the sofa, you can’t even see the house.”

Stacy’s personal favorite aspect of the yard, an antique iron kettle in the gravel courtyard, is a nod to the property’s history as a former sheep farm.

“We found the kettle in the woods when the property was cleared,” she said. “It was full of water, so we decided to try a few small fish and aquatic plants in it, just for fun. We loved it so much [that] we moved it front and center and built a garden around it. It’s magical.”

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You can't see the house from the comfort of this outdoor seating area. (Credit: ©Anthony Crisafulli)



The yard has a special place for entertaining. (Credit: ©Anthony Crisafulli)